Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office

2014/15 Annual Service Plan Report

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Minister's Message and Accountability Statement

I am pleased to present the 2014/15 Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office Annual Service Plan Report.

Ministry staff have worked tirelessly following the August 4, 2014 Mt. Polley mine tailings pond breach near Likely, BC. While full environmental remediation will take years, we have established a long-term plan which sets a clear path towards the recovery process. In November 2014, a progress report was issued by the Ministry. We will continue to work closely with First Nations and local communities to ensure the necessary actions are taken to restore the environment back to its original state as best we can and hold those responsible for the breach accountable for doing so. Furthermore, the Environmental Assessment Office is taking additional steps to ensure the safety of tailings management facilities at proposed mines in BC.

Although the federal government approved the Northern Gateway pipeline in June 2014, it is still our position that all new and expanded heavy oil pipeline proposals must meet our five conditions before the Province will consider supporting them. This includes the implementation of a world-leading land-based spill regime to ensure the necessary preparedness, response and recovery mechanisms are in place to manage the risks and costs of heavy-oil pipelines and other hazardous materials.

The *Greenhouse Gas Industrial Reporting and Control Act* received Royal Assent on November 27, 2014. This legislation upholds the Province's commitments to having the cleanest liquefied natural gas (LNG) operations in the world. As the cleanest-burning fossil fuel, natural gas is part of a global climate solution. The Province has also funded airshed studies in Prince Rupert, Kitimat, and contributed towards an air quality characterization study in the Northeast to examine the impacts of LNG-related development in those regions.

In December 2014, the Province approved the Site C Clean Energy project, concluding it will provide the most affordable, reliable clean power for over 100 years. The project, which has undergone a thorough and independent multi-year environmental assessment process, is scheduled to start construction in summer 2015. The Environmental Assessment Office, will co-ordinate compliance efforts with other government agencies to ensure that certificate conditions are met.

In March 2014, we announced our plans to expand the fight against invasive mussels with a $1.3million boost toward early detection and rapid response. This program expansion increases protection of BC's lakes and rivers against the threat of quagga and zebra mussels.

The *Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office 2014/15 Annual Service Plan Report* was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

Honorable Mary Polak

Minister of Environment
June 18, 2015

Table of Contents

Minister's Message and Accountability Statement 3
Purpose of the Ministry 4
Strategic Direction and Context 5
Strategic Direction 5
Strategic Context 5
Report on Performance 6
Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results 6
Financial Report 18
Financial Report Summary Table 18
Environmental Assessment Office 20
Purpose of the Office 20
Strategic Direction and Context 20
Strategic Direction 20
Strategic Context 20
Report on Performance 21
Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results 22
Appendix A: Ministry Contact Information 26
Appendix B: List of Crowns, Agencies, Boards and Commissions 29
Appendix C: Minister's Mandate and Actions Summary 30

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Environment is responsible for the effective protection, management and conservation of BC's water, land, air and living resources. Its expertise in science, research, and analysis are central to supporting all its responsibilities. Ministry legislation, regulation and public outreach activities ensure a healthy environment for British Columbians, sustainable economic development, and clear and predictable regulations for the business community. Key Ministry functions include:

- administering the Province's parks and protected areas;
- monitoring and enforcing compliance with environmental laws and regulations;
- leading on climate action;
- managing discharges to the environment from human activities;
- using scientific expertise to inform and lead environmental management in BC; and
- protecting BC's biodiversity, including ecosystems, native species and natural habitats.

Strategic Direction and Context

Strategic Direction

All Ministers, as members of the BC Executive Council (Provincial Cabinet) are provided letters from the Premier outlining their key responsibilities. The Minister of Environment's mandate letter dated June 2013 provided the Minister's direction for the 2014/15 year. The results of the Ministry's work on that direction can be found in *Appendix C: Minister's Mandate and Actions Summary*.

In addition to responding to the specific direction outlined in the mandate letter, this annual service plan report demonstrates the ways in which the Ministry is supporting the Government's *Canada Starts Here: BC Jobs Plan* and the *Province of British Columbia Strategic Plan (2014/15-2017/18)*.

In June 2014, Government introduced the Taxpayer Accountability Principles (TAP) to strengthen government and Crown accountabilities to the public. This report has been streamlined and simplified in support of TAP.

Strategic Context

BC is renowned worldwide for its unique and diverse environmental features. Intact predator-prey systems, a vast parks and protected areas network and an array of ecosystems and their plant and animal species make up the province. Protecting the environment, along with sustainable economic growth, are top government priorities.

With the responsibility for environmental protection comes the opportunity to sustainably develop our natural resources, such as liquefied natural gas, mining and forestry. As we work to realize these opportunities, the Province's commitment to world-leading environmental protection laws will not change, striking the right balance where both the environment and economy can thrive.

To help strike that balance, BC remains committed to leadership in the area of greenhouse gas emissions reductions and adapting to climate change. Global climate change has already had economic and environmental consequences for BC, as seen in the spread of the mountain pine beetle. However, it also presents opportunities in the areas of green jobs and investments, technology training and advancements.

Proper environmental management can also help prevent damage and costs before they occur. For example, the establishment of invasive species such as zebra and quagga mussels can cause damage to infrastructure and industry, requiring resources to be diverted from other areas. The Province is taking proactive steps to manage the spread of invasive species to protect our native flora and fauna and avoid costs in the future.

The Province must also look beyond its own borders to accomplish many of its goals; the pressures faced elsewhere can easily become pressures in BC. That is why the Province will continue to partner with the federal government, neighbouring jurisdictions and international agencies to collectively benefit the environment.

Report on Performance

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results

Goal 1: Effective action on climate change

Objective 1.1: Reduced provincial greenhouse emissions

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- providing emissions inventory at the provincial, community and industrial level to assist British Columbians in better understanding their greenhouse gas emissions and informing them of strategies to reduce them;
- advising Government and reporting to British Columbians on BC's progress in delivering on the commitments in the *Climate Action Plan* and the expected results in reaching BC's greenhouse gas reduction targets;
- driving government leadership on climate action by leading BC's Carbon Neutral Government commitment and supporting local governments in meeting their own commitments, including working towards carbon neutrality, under the Climate Action Charter; and
- proposing policies and programs across government to reduce emissions, including carbon pricing, regulatory measures and incentives.

Performance Measure 1: Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

Performance Measure	2007[2] Baseline	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2014 Actual	2015 Target	2016 Target	2017 Target
Annual level of greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia relative to 2007 levels[1]	65.9 megatonnes	62.4 megatonnes	18% reduction by 2016 (54.0 megatonnes)	DATA NOT AVAILABLE[3]	18% reduction by 2016 (54.0 megatonnes)	18% reduction by 2016 (54.0 megatonnes)	33% reduction by 2020 (44.2 megatonnes)

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, *British Columbia Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report 2012*.

[1] Targets shown in this table reflect the targets for 2016 and 2020 set under the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*.

[2] Data analyzed by calendar year.

[3] Data for the 2014 calendar year will be available in 2016.

Discussion of Results

Using 2007 as a baseline reference year, the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act* establishes BC's target of reducing annual greenhouse gas emissions by 33 percent and 80 percent by 2020 and 2050, respectively. Greenhouse gases are measured in units of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. Emissions estimates for 2007 and later years can be expected to differ slightly with the release of each

inventory report due to refined calculation methods. In 2013 total emissions were estimated at 62.4 megatonnes of greenhouse gases, including data revisions and forest carbon offsets. That estimate is approximately 5.3 percent below the baseline level. Data for 2014 was not available at publication, and will be released in the *2015/16 Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office Annual Service Plan Report*.

Objective 1.2: Effective management of the risks associated with a changing climate

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- working across government to integrate climate change adaptation into government business;
- working with partners such as the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium to develop tools to support BC decision-makers in preparing for anticipated impacts of climate change; and
- investigating options to accelerate adaptation efforts across BC, including financial mechanisms and regulatory options.

Performance Measure 2: Review BC Government policies, strategies and operational activities to ensure that they will deliver the desired objectives for their sectors in a changing climate

Performance Measure	2012/13 Baseline	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Completion of sector based policy, strategy, or operational reviews for climate sensitive business areas[1]	2	4	4	5 ACHIEVED	5	6	N/A[2]

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled.

[1] Targets are cumulative.

[2] The project underlying this performance measure will complete in 2016/17.

Discussion of Results

Government's adaptation strategy recognizes the importance of working with stakeholders in climate sensitive sectors such as natural resources, health care, agriculture, tourism and transportation in order to assess risk and prioritize actions to reduce adverse impacts from climate change. In 2014/15, the Ministry of Environment worked with the Fraser Basin Council to complete the Northeastern British Columbia Climate Risk Assessment for the Oil and Gas Sector. This assessment complements earlier initiatives which include a climate change risk and opportunity assessment for the agricultural sector, a forestry sector climate adaptation action plan, an assessment of the vulnerability of highway infrastructure to climate change, and policy assessments for the mining sector and for coastal flooding.

Objective 1.3: Promote innovative approaches to grow the Green Economy

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- leading cross-government efforts on the Green Economy elements of the *BC Jobs Plan*;
- working with large industrial emitters, such as liquefied natural gas exporters, to develop greenhouse gas management strategies to limit their carbon liability while providing new opportunities to reduce energy costs and access new markets;
- expanding the range of tools to attract investments in innovation such as offsets and government capital spending;
- working across government to promote demonstration projects that showcase BC clean energy and technologies as business solutions to environmental problems; and
- coordinating provincial relations with federal and international partners on climate actions to ensure coordinated and effective approaches for BC businesses, as well as developing new relationships with export markets.

Objective 1.4: Deliver a cost effective, diversified and strategic carbon offset portfolio

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- competitively negotiating purchases while ensuring offset compliance and a diversity of environmental, social and economic benefits;
- monitoring and maintaining an appropriate level of risk in the portfolio of offset projects;
- implementing mechanisms that support the growth of BC-based clean technologies; and
- managing a portfolio of offset projects that are sourced from industries across the province.

Goal 2: Clean and safe water, land and air

Objective 2.1: Enhanced protection and stewardship of our water resources

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- engaging with First Nations, stakeholders and the public to develop new water sustainability legislation to protect stream health and aquatic environments, improve water governance arrangements, introduce more flexibility and efficiency in the water allocation system, and regulate groundwater use in priority areas and for large withdrawals;

- encouraging shared water stewardship by leading and coordinating the implementation of the actions and commitments in *Living Water Smart: British Columbia's Water Plan* (www.livingwatersmart.ca);
- working with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, the Environmental Assessment Office and the Oil and Gas Commission to protect surface and groundwater resources;
- assessing the health of surface and groundwater resources through collaborative science and monitoring programs; and
- actively contributing to the Council of the Federation's Water Stewardship Council and engaging other governments and external stakeholders in implementing the *Water Charter*.

Performance Measure 3: Water quality trends monitored under the Canada – BC Water Quality Monitoring Agreement

Performance Measure	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target
Percentage of water bodies monitored under the Canada – BC Water Quality Monitoring Agreement with stable or improving water quality trends	96%	96%	96% or greater	91% NOT ACHIEVED	N/A[1]

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled.
[1] Performance measure not being tracked beyond 2014/15.

Discussion of Results

This performance measure tracks whether water quality is stable or improving in important BC water bodies. Under the Canada – BC Water Quality Monitoring Agreement, 38 provincially-significant rivers and streams are routinely monitored for water quality including the Fraser, Columbia, Peace and Skeena river basins. Through this agreement, the Ministry collects data on the concentration of variables such as metals, nutrients, pH, temperature and dissolved oxygen.

Using this data, the Ministry is able to identify overall trends in water quality. For 2014/15, six additional monitoring stations in the Fraser River Basin were added, resulting in 91 percent of water bodies showing stable or improving water quality trends, a change from previous years. The Fraser River is the largest river basin in BC and is under pressure from human activity, thus the drop from 96 percent to 91 percent was expected, but does not indicate an actual decline in the province's overall water quality.

The Canada-BC Water Quality Monitoring Program also assisted with the response to the Mt. Polley tailings dam breach in August 2014 by increasing sampling frequency at two key downstream sites and initiating a new site on the Quesnel River at Likely. Daily sampling was conducted at two of these sites for the critical period following the breach. The new Quesnel River site, funded through an agreement with the Mt. Polley Mining Corporation, was established downstream of Quesnel Lake to better identify long-term water quality impacts and emerging issues that may arise from the breach.

Objective 2.2: Reduced contamination from toxins and waste

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to work with industry to develop, implement and continuously improve industry-led product stewardship programs;[1]
- regulating the management of waste and remediation of contaminated sites in order to protect human and environmental health and facilitate economic development; and
- collaborating with industry, communities, public organizations and other agencies to protect human health and the environment by promoting the safe use of hazardous products.

Objective 2.3: Enhanced protection and stewardship of our air

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- leading the implementation of policies and initiatives designed to avoid, minimize and offset contaminant emissions from industry, transportation and urban growth;
- continuing to develop new industrial air emissions standards using best achievable technology practices;
- developing ambient air quality objectives, standards, guidelines and other resources to support airshed planning and decision making in permitting and environmental assessment processes;
- collaborating with the federal and provincial governments to develop a national air quality management system that will include national emission standards, national ambient air quality standards and be delivered through an air zone management approach; and
- collaborating with the Oil and Gas Commission, the Ministry of Energy and Mines, the Ministry of Natural Gas Development and local partners in the northeast to monitor, report out to the public, assess and reduce impacts of oil and gas development on air quality.

Performance Measure 4: Clean air standards for industry

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Number of air emission standards incorporating current Best Achievable Technology practices	3	8	9	9 ACHIEVED	10[1]	11	12

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled.

Note: Target figures are cumulative.

[1] Starting in 2015/16, this performance measure will expand to track clean technology standards beyond air emissions (e.g. land and water).

[1] As per the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility.

Discussion of Results

New provisions in the *Mushroom Composting Facilities Regulation* came into force in May 2014. Compliance with the requirement for active aeration at mushroom composting facilities will ensure improved air quality for the protection of human health and the environment at and near these operations.

Objective 2.4: Effective management of environmental risks

As mentioned in the Minister's mandate letter, the Ministry will be completing the marine and land-based heavy oil spill response studies for the Province's five conditions for proposed heavy oil pipeline projects in BC.

Events such as spills and catastrophic fires can present risks to public health and safety, property and the environment. Although not all environmental risks are avoidable, effective management can help to minimize and offset the impact of these risks. The Ministry anticipates, responds to and manages the consequences of risks to the environment, as well as risks to public safety involving human wildlife conflict.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- developing and implementing a world-class regime that ensures the prevention, preparation, response to and recovery from spills that affect human health and the environment;
- promoting stewardship with other provincial agencies, industry, First Nations, local government, federal government and other stakeholders to protect the public and the environment in the event of an emergency or disaster;
- implementing new compliance approaches that allow the Ministry to improve its response to environmental risks and provide increased public accountability;
- minimizing the creation of future contaminated sites and managing the remediation of high-risk contaminated sites;
- collaborating with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to manage the public safety risks of human-wildlife interactions; and
- conducting investigations into non-compliance with regulatory requirements designed to protect the environment, human health and public safety.

Goal 3: Healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems

Objective 3.1: Well-managed, integrated, open and accessible information on species and ecosystems

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- developing data systems to support the acquisition and management of data and information, and providing open access to that information in support of science, policy development and shared stewardship;
- employing the B.C. Species and Ecosystems Explorer to make available information on species and ecosystems at risk, including their conservation status, associated threats and conservation priorities; and
- assessing the conservation status of plants, animals and ecosystems and related risks and threats throughout BC, including parks and protected areas.

Objective 3.2: Conserved, maintained and enhanced native species and ecosystems

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- implementing applied science and research programs to support continued improvement in the conservation of species and ecosystem;
- providing leadership in overall program coordination for species at risk, including preparing and implementing recovery plans, legal listing and intergovernmental relations;
- supporting natural resource integrated decision making through the development of consistent approaches, tools and policies, such as implementing the environmental mitigation and offsetting policy and associated procedures;
- addressing invasive species by collaborating with partners on strategies, providing enforcement services under the *Wildlife Act*, and using a specialized Conservation Officer Service response team to respond to controlled alien species; and
- conducting investigations into non-compliance with regulatory requirements designed to protect native species and their habitat.

Performance Measure 5: Changes in the conservation status of native species

Performance Measure	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/5 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target
Changes in the conservation status of species	Net Decline	Stable	Net Improvement	Net Decline NOT ACHIEVED	N/A[1]

Data Source: Ministry of Environment.

Note: This measure reflects the net change in the conservation status of species in B.C.

[1] Performance measure not being tracked beyond 2014/15.

Discussion of Results

In 2014/15, the Conservation Data Centre conducted reviews of 3,206 species that had a current status rank. There were 30 changes in species status ranks that reflected real changes in abundance or distribution (14 improved, 16 worsened). Other changes in ranking were not reflective of changes in populations, but were due to improvements in inventory information, knowledge of species taxonomy and threats, or changes in ranking procedures. Additionally, 6,335 reviews of previously unranked or preliminarily-ranked species were conducted.

While the target of a net improvement in the status of ranked native species and ecosystems was not met, the results nevertheless indicate relative stability over the reporting period.

Objective 3.3: Protect and manage natural values in parks and protected areas

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- protecting, restoring and managing high-priority habitat and ecosystems including invasive species, forest health impacts, species at risk and landscape connectivity;
- collaborating with First Nations and communities in protected areas planning and management to ensure long-term protection of natural, historical, cultural and recreational assets;
- strengthening the role parks and protected areas play in climate change adaptation; and
- increasing and promoting partnerships to expand the opportunities and involvement in stewardship initiatives.

Goal 4: British Columbians share responsibility for the environment

Objective 4.1: British Columbians are engaged in environmental stewardship initiatives

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- promoting the sharing of responsibility for protecting the environment, human health and public safety through initiatives such as Bear Smart and Urban Ungulate programs;
- continuing to work with stewardship organizations such as the Cowichan Valley Stream Association and the Prince George Air Improvement Roundtable;
- promoting outdoor activities to foster a connection to and an appreciation for the natural environment; and
- developing and supporting conversations with the public, non-profit groups, communities, First Nations, academia and industry on environmental policies such as climate change, water stewardship and waste management.

Objective 4.2: British Columbians are provided with the information they need to make sound environmental choices

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- recognizing, promoting and enhancing shared stewardship through communication, consultative processes and volunteer initiatives that engage stakeholders, clients and partners;
- enhancing and promoting shared stewardship through effective and timely communication of compliance actions; and
- informing the environmental choices of British Columbians through the use of online tools that provide information and scientific data on the state of environment, including @LiveSmartBC.ca, @EnvReportBC, Environmental Reporting BC, www.bcairquality.ca and www.livingwatersmart.ca.

Objective 4.3: Industry and client groups implement best environmental management practices

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to work with industry to develop, implement and continuously improve industry-led product stewardship programs;[2]
- encouraging compliance by reporting the names of those in non-compliance with Ministry environmental standards and regulatory requirements in the *Quarterly Environmental Enforcement Summaries*;
- expanding the role of qualified professionals in supporting the Ministry's regulatory role;
- continuing to explore opportunities to reduce regulatory burden through changes to streamline authorization requirements and support economic development;
- encouraging other jurisdictions to follow our carbon initiatives in order to ensure B.C. industries are not placed at a competitive disadvantage for playing their part in addressing climate change; and
- continuing to provide leadership in reducing municipal solid waste disposal, including the diversion of organic waste.

[2] As per the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility.

Performance Measure 6: Completion of the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility

Performance Measure	2011/12 Baseline	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Percentage of product sub-categories[1] in the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility fully covered by industry-led recycling programs in British Columbia	53%	68%	79%	79% ACHIEVED	84%	95%	100%

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled.

[1] The Canada-wide Action Plan places a number of products into different categories. The Ministry divides these categories into sub-categories. This is done because some product categories include a large number of products and require multiple industry-led stewardship programs in order to attain complete coverage. For example, packaging is a category which the Ministry divides into two subcategories: beverage containers; and packaging and printed paper.

Discussion of Results

BC's industry-led product stewardship programs require producers of designated products to take Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for the life cycle management of their products. BC has 22 operational EPR programs, the most of any Canadian jurisdiction, covering 79 percent (15 of 19) of the product sub-categories identified in the Canada-wide Action Plan for EPR, with the most recent program for packaging and printed paper implemented in May 2014. More information on BC's approach to product stewardship and a complete list of products with industry-led stewardship programs can be found on the Ministry of Environment's product stewardship website.

Performance Measure 7: Municipal solid and organic waste disposal

Performance Measure	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Per capita municipal solid waste disposal (kg per person)	New measure	535	500	DATA NOT AVAILABLE[1]	500	450	400
Per cent of population covered by an organic waste disposal ban	New measure	5%	66%	66% ACHIEVED	66%	68%	70%

Data Source: B.C. Waste Disposal Calculator and manually compiled regional district data.

[1] Per capita disposal rate data from regional districts for 2014 was not available at publication, and will be published in the *2015/16 Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office Annual Service Plan Report*.

Discussion of Results

Municipal solid waste comes from residential, commercial, institutional, demolition, land clearing and construction sources. The per capita disposal rate estimates how much waste each person sends to landfills for disposal (i.e. neither reused nor recycled) in a given year. Although data for 2014/15 was not available at publication, data from past years suggest the Ministry is on track to meet its targets.

For example, data reported by regional districts to the BC Waste Disposal Calculator shows the 2013/14 provincial municipal solid waste disposal rate was 535 kilograms per person, which is below that fiscal year's forecast of 550 kilograms per person.

Organic waste represents up to 40 percent of all waste currently sent to landfills for disposal. In 2013/14 only 5 percent of the population was covered by an organic waste disposal ban. The rate increased to 66 percent in 2014/15, meeting the projected target, with the implementation of bans by Metro Vancouver and the Capital Regional District.

Goal 5: Sustainable use of British Columbia's environmental resources

Objective 5.1: Wise management of and continued benefits from the province's natural resources

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- operating the hydrometric and air monitoring networks[3] to obtain information to support water and airshed management;
- acquiring, interpreting and openly sharing environmental science and information;
- supporting communities engaged in multi-stakeholder air and water management;
- fostering sustainable natural resource management through collaborative approaches with the public, non-profit groups, communities, First Nations, academia and industry; and
- protecting the province's natural resources from costly, damaging and fraudulent activities.

Objective 5.2: Optimize outdoor recreation and economic opportunities from BC's parks

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- promoting sponsorships, partnerships and donation opportunities to enhance conservation and recreation opportunities in BC Parks;
- continuing to promote volunteering that engages British Columbians in conservation and recreation activities throughout BC Parks;
- working with partners both inside and outside government to implement strategies and programs that promote and deliver exceptional outdoor opportunities;

[3] The B.C. hydrometric network is an environmental monitoring system that collects stream flow data from over 450 locations in B.C. The data are essential for hydroelectric power production, infrastructure, as well as for flood forecasting, agriculture and other purposes.

- working with Park Facility Operators and other partners to ensure effective and high quality park experiences for visitors; and
- optimizing stewardship and economic opportunities with First Nations, local communities, non-profit groups, private land owners and others.

Performance Measure 8: Park visitation and visitor satisfaction

Performance Measure	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Number of recorded park visits	20.8 million	21.3 million	21.3 million	21.3 million ACHIEVED	21.0 million[1]	21.3 million	21.6 million
Park visitor satisfaction level	79%	81%	80%	DATA NOT AVAILABLE[2]	N/A[3]	N/A	N/A

Data Sources: Ministry of Environment, BC Parks Visitor Satisfaction Survey and Parks Attendance and Revenue System.
[1] Targets for 2015/16 onwards have been adjusted downwards, see *Discussion of Results* below.
[2] The BC Parks Visitor Satisfaction Survey was not conducted in 2014/15.
[3] BC Parks visitor satisfaction is not being tracked beyond 2014/15.

Discussion of Results

The number of visitors to provincial parks is used to measure the contribution of parks to the government's priorities of promoting healthy communities, and creating a strong tourism sector. Estimates show the number of park visits in 2014/15 will be very close to the target of 21.3 million. Targets for 2015/16 and 2016/17 were adjusted downwards in the *2014/15-2016/17 Ministry of Environment and Environmental Assessment Office Service Plan* to better reflect recent trends in park visitation.

The Visitor Satisfaction Survey was cancelled in 2014/15 to facilitate a project review. It will resume in 2015/16, but will no longer be used as a performance measure for the Ministry.

Financial Report

Financial Report Summary Table

	Estimated	Other Authorizations	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses ($000)					
Environmental Protection	9,288	0	9,288	10,030	(742)
Environmental Sustainability	19,083	0	19,083	16,978	2,105
BC Parks	31,751	0	31,751	31,762	(11)
Conservation Officer Services	16,714	0	16,714	16,802	(88)
Climate Action	3,271	0	3,271	2,087	1,184
Executive and Support Services	21,136	0	21,136	23,003	(1,867)
Environmental Assessment Office	11,714	0	11,714	11,605	109
Park Enhancement Fund	1,800	0	1,800	1,741	59
Sustainable Environment Fund	18,935	0	18,935	18,935	0
Sub-Total	**133,692**	**0**	**133,692**	**132,943**	**749**
Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual [1]	0	0	0	(162)	162
Total	133,692	0	133,692	132,781	911
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) ($000)					
Executive and Support Services	18,633	0	18,633	18,497	136
Park Enhancement Fund	400	0	400	0	400
Total	**19,033**	**0**	**19,033**	**18,497**	**536**

Other Financing Transactions ($000)					
Climate Action: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Offsets (Purchase)					
Receipts	0	0	0	0	0
Disbursements	10,000	0	10,000	9,924	76
Net Cash Source (Requirements)	10,000	0	10,000	9,924	76
Total Receipts	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total Disbursements	**10,000**	**0**	**10,000**	**9,924**	**76**
Total Net Cash Source (Requirements)	**10,000**	**0**	**10,000**	**9,924**	**76**

[1] The Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual of $0.162 million is a reversal of accruals in the previous year.

Environmental Assessment Office

Purpose of the Office

The Environmental Assessment Office ensures proposed major projects meet provincial environmental, economic and social objectives. The process evaluates proposed projects that are reviewable under the *Environmental Assessment Act* for potential adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects. If a project is approved by Ministers, the Environmental Assessment Office verifies and enforces compliance with the conditions set out in environmental assessment certificates.

The Environmental Assessment Office continues to identify innovations that ensure timelines are appropriate for both economic development and environmental protection objectives, while contributing to the *Canada Starts Here: BC Jobs Plan*, controlling spending and balancing the budget.

Strategic Direction and Context

Strategic Direction

The mandate letter provided to the Minister of Environment by the Premier on June 10, 2013, called on the Minister to review the Environmental Assessment Office to ensure timelines were appropriate for both economic development and environmental protection objectives, and make recommendations for improvement as necessary. Some of the resulting transformative shifts include:

- ensuring public consultation will occur earlier in the environmental assessment process to focus on key issues;
- increasing the emphasis on collaboration with agency partners, including a Memorandum of Understanding with the BC Oil and Gas Commission to improve timeliness of reviews and strengthen compliance and enforcement;
- developing a coordinated approach across provincial government agencies (e.g. regulatory working group, consistent project working group members), which will result in consistent working group members for LNG projects; and
- making shifts in the approach to scoping environmental assessments on the basis of valued components (i.e. aspects of an environmental assessment that are studied).

Strategic Context

In order to support increasing demand of LNG projects, the Environmental Assessment Office realigned internal resources and took innovative approaches to ensure efficient and consistent assessments across the projects within the office.

The introduction of fees for environmental assessments and post-certificate work (as part of the review of the Environmental Assessment Office) provided a $2.96 million annual lift to the Environmental Assessment Office budget to help stabilize and maintain capacity and resources.

Report on Performance

The Environmental Assessment Office is conducting environmental assessments of 73 projects, representing over $115 billion in potential capital investment to BC's economy. Eight of those projects were referred to Ministers for decision, with all receiving an environmental assessment certificate and approval to proceed to the permitting process.

The Environmental Assessment Office completed the assessments of the Pacific Northwest LNG, the Coastal GasLink, the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission and the Westcoast Connector Gas Transmission Projects by developing partnerships with other government agencies that:

- provided a timely, predictable results-based regime, meeting Government's commitments to industry while upholding the public interest; and
- identified key issues early in the EA process and sought support from provincial government agencies to ensure early resolution (e.g. air quality, wildlife and cumulative effects).

Table 1: Assessments completed in the fiscal year of 2014/15

Project Name	Sector	Potential Capital Investment ($M)	CEAA Coordinated EA[4]	Certificate Date
Brucejack Gold Mine Project	Mining	450.00	Yes	March 26, 2015
Coastal GasLink Pipeline Project	Energy	4,000.00	No	October 23, 2014
KSM (Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell) Project	Mining	3,500.00	Yes	July 29, 2014
Meikle Wind Energy Project	Energy	400.00	No	June 24, 2014
Pacific NorthWest LNG Project	Energy	18,000.00	Yes	November 25, 2014
Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project	Energy	5,000.00	No	November 25, 2014
Site C Clean Energy Project	Energy	7,900.00	No (Panel)	October 14, 2014
Westcoast Connector Gas Transmission Project	Energy	6,000.00	No	November 25, 2014

The Environmental Assessment Office also conducted amendments to eight certified projects for a variety of reasons, including:

- addition of an open pit at Line Creek Operations Phase II;
- construction and operation of a new rail spur for the Peace Valley OSB Project; and
- relocation of a powerhouse for the Tretheway Creek Waterpower Project.

The approach and related resources for completing amendments are determined according to the scope of the amendment itself.

[4] In some cases, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency reviews proposed projects that are also undergoing review by the Environmental Assessment office.

Coordination with the Federal Government

The Environmental Assessment Office has continued to realize major advancements in coordination with the federal government since implementing substitution in March 2013. Substitution means where both federal and provincial environmental assessments are triggered, there will be one process – the provincial one – and two decisions – federal and provincial. Table 2 represents the number of substituted projects granted in 2014/15, eliminating duplication involved in having two assessments. In total, the Environmental Assessment Office has received approval for 13 substituted projects. The first substituted project to progress through the environmental assessment process will be completed in early 2015/16.

Table 2: Projects granted substitution in the 2014/15 fiscal year

Project	Date Approved
Alley Mine Project	November 24, 2014
Aurora LNG Digby Island	August 21, 2014
Aurora LNG Grassy Point	August 21, 2014 (withdrawn)
Grassy Point LNG	November 28, 2014
Kemess Underground Mine Project	April 9, 2014
Ruddock Creek Mine Project	July 16, 2014
WCC LNG Project	March 4, 2015

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results

Goal 1: Maintaining the integrity of Environmental Assessment

The environmental assessment process is an integrated and iterative process in which the Environmental Assessment Office works with the proponent, government agencies, First Nations, potentially affected parties, and the public to ensure potentially adverse effects of a proposed project are identified and avoided or mitigated so if the project is to proceed, it will do so in a sustainable manner. As part of the Environmental Assessment Office review, proponents and participants involved in environmental assessment will receive clearer guidelines throughout the process. The Environmental Assessment Office ensures once an environmental assessment has been completed, Ministers are informed of both the potential benefits and adverse effects of the proposed project before they decide whether or not to issue an environmental assessment conditional certificate.

Objective 1.1: Build upon a strong legislative framework

British Columbia's *Environmental Assessment Act* has been in place since 1994. The Act was subsequently amended in 2001 to allow for more flexible and responsive procedures. One of the major strengths of BC's environmental assessment legislation is its requirement that certain phases of project reviews be completed within specific timelines.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- ensuring all relevant information is incorporated into the proponent's application for an environmental assessment certificate, thereby greatly reducing the need to suspend the review during the legislated 180-day application review period;
- developing business requirements and specifications for a modernized business management system, including the introduction of proponent self-service, increased public engagement, enhanced project tracking and alignment with the natural resource sector;
- identifying policy, practice and legislative options to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the environmental assessment review process; and
- working with other provincial agencies to improve service to clients and the public, including participating in the natural resource sector integrated decision making process.

Performance Measure 1: Application reviews in the B.C. environmental assessment process are completed within 180-days

Performance Measure	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Percentage of application reviews completed within 180-days							
B.C. process only	100%	100%	100%	100% ACHIEVED	100%	100%	100%
Joint B.C./Canada process	N/A	N/A	100%	100% ACHIEVED	100%	100%	100%

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office staff, manually compiled.

Discussion

The legislative timelines in the *Environmental Assessment Act* include a 180-day limit for the Environmental Assessment Office to review applications for environmental assessment certificates. These timelines offer process certainty to stakeholders and are important for effective planning and decision making.

Once a proponent's project application is accepted for review, the Environmental Assessment Office strives to complete the environmental assessment within the 180-day time limit. While a proposed project may be suspended for various reasons within the 180-day timeline, none of the eight projects that were referred to Ministers for decision in 2014/15 were suspended at any point during the environmental assessment process.

Objective 1.2: Ensure desired outcomes related to provincial environmental, social and economic goals are delivered to the people of British Columbia

Strategies

The key strategy for this objective is to maintain and continually improve the effectiveness of the environmental assessment process by developing a quality assurance program that includes:

- continuous improvement and ongoing enhancement of the environmental assessment process before an environmental assessment certificate is issued; and
- a compliance management program to ensure projects comply with certificate conditions and commitments.

Performance Measure 2: Compliance inspections completed on certified projects

Performance Measure	2012/13 Baseline	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Number of compliance inspections completed on certified projects	17	23	23	27 ACHIEVED	23	25	27

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office staff, manually compiled.

Discussion

The Environmental Assessment Office conducts field and administrative inspections on certified projects. This performance measure reports on the Environmental Assessment Office's field inspections while other compliance agencies conduct additional inspections on environmental assessment projects. Inspections provide the opportunity to gain important context about project development and to verify that certificate requirements are being followed. Environmental Assessment Office Compliance Officers are also designated as Natural Resource Officers under the *Natural Resource Compliance Act*, allowing them to enforce a suite of natural resource legislation.

The Environmental Assessment Office develops an annual inspection plan, and additional inspections are conducted as needed to address compliance issues and complaints. Projects are selected for inspection based on criteria such as project risk, project stage, location, and compliance history. Each year, the Environmental Assessment Office identifies a sector or type of project as a focus. In 2014/15, the Environmental Assessment Office identified pipeline, transmission line and transportation projects as focuses.

Goal 2: Successful Partnerships

Objective 2.1: Ensure effective partnerships with provincial agencies are established, maintained and enhanced

One of the key functions provided by the Environmental Assessment Office is the coordination and assessment of technical input from various provincial agencies into environmental assessments of proposed projects. In this role, building positive relationships and effective communication networks is a major function undertaken by the Environmental Assessment Office. One of the ways the Environmental Assessment Office contributed to this was by signing a Memorandum of Understanding on October 17, 2013, with the Oil and Gas Commission to streamline environmental assessments and permitting for liquefied natural gas projects by reducing duplication and improving timeliness. By coordinating this work and sharing information, there will be a single, predictable regulatory regime for liquefied natural gas projects from start to finish.

Performance Measure 3: Timely response to compliance reports received from environmental certificate holders

Performance Measure	2013/14 Baseline	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target
Compliance reports submitted by environmental assessment certificate holders reviewed by staff and posted online within six weeks of receipt	New measure	95%	95%	96.7% ACHIEVED	N/A[1]

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office staff, manually compiled.

[1] Performance measure not being tracked beyond 2014/15.

Discussion

Environmental assessment certificates typically require a certificate holder to submit compliance self-reports explaining how they are addressing the certificate conditions. Self-reports promote compliance by requiring certificate holders to publicly report on their progress, and are one of many sources of information reviewed by the Environmental Assessment Office to inform compliance oversight.

The Environmental Assessment Office reviews the self-reports, follows up with agencies and certificate holders, and posts the reports online. Typically, this process can be completed within six weeks. Occasionally, additional time is required to gather more information or investigate potential non-compliances. Information in self-reports may be verified through field or administrative inspections. The Environmental Assessment Office's internal procedures are now fully established regarding self-reports, so this measure will not be reported on in future years.

The Environmental Assessment Office works extensively with permitting agencies to ensure an appropriate relationship between permitting and environmental assessment conditions. In every environmental assessment, the project teams seek input into conditions from working groups, technical experts and permitting agencies. Specific mitigation measures are refined through focused reviews with key permitting authorities to ensure effective relationships between environmental assessment and permit requirements.

Appendix A: Ministry Contact Information

Headquarters
Victoria
Telephone: 250 387-9870
Fax: 250 387-6003
Website: www.gov.bc.ca/env/
Additional contact information can be found at www.gov.bc.ca/env/contacts.html.

Regional Offices

Coast Region

West Coast

Nanaimo Office:
Telephone: 250 751-3100
Fax: 250 751-3103
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/van-island/
Other offices: Black Creek, Duncan, Goldstream Park, Queen Charlotte City, Parksville, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Ucluelet

South Coast

Surrey Office:
Telephone: 604 582-5200
Fax: 604 930-7119
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/lower-mainland/
Other offices: Brackendale (Squamish), Cultus Lake, Maple Ridge, North Vancouver, Sechelt, Powell River

Southern Interior Region

Cariboo/Thompson

Kamloops Office:
Telephone: 250 371-6200
Fax: 250 828-4000
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/thompson/

Williams Lake Office:
Telephone: 250 398-4530
Fax: 250 398-4214
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/cariboo/
Other offices: Clearwater, Lillooet, Merritt, Kelowna, Oliver, Princeton, Vernon, 100 Mile House, Quesnel

Kootenay/Okanagan

Nelson Office:
Telephone: 250 354-6333
Fax: 250 354-6332
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/kootenay/
Other offices: Castlegar, Creston/West Creston, Fernie, Grand Forks, Invermere, Golden, Revelstoke

Penticton Office:
Telephone: 250 490-8200
Fax: 250 490-2231
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/okanagan/

Cranbrook Office:
Telephone: 250 489-8540
Fax: 250 489-8506

Northern Region

Skeena

Smithers Office:
Telephone: 250 847-7260
Fax: 250 847-7591
Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/skeena/
Other offices: Atlin, Burns Lake, Dease Lake, Terrace/Lakelse Lake

Omineca

Environmental Protection Division
Conservation Officer Service
Water Stewardship
Prince George Office:
Telephone: 250 565-6135
Fax: 250 565-6629

Environmental Sustainability
Parks and Protected Areas
Prince George Office:
Telephone: 250 565-6135
Fax: 250 565-6940

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/omineca/
Other offices: Vanderhoof, Mackenzie, Mount Robson, Fort St. James

Peace

Fort St. John Office
Telephone: 250 787-3411
Fax: 250 787-3490

Water Stewardship
Phone: 250 565-6135
Fax: 250 565-6629

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/peace/
Other offices: Chetwynd/Moberly Lake Park, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson/Liard Hotsprings

Report all Poachers and Polluters (RAPP)
Telephone: Dial Toll-Free 1-877-952-7277
Report online: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cos/rapp/form.htm

Environmental Assessment Office Contact Information

836 Yates Street
PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria B.C. V8W 9V1
Email: eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca
Website: www.eao.gov.bc.ca

Appendix B: List of Crowns, Agencies, Boards and Commissions

Environmental Appeal Board

Forest Appeals Commission

Appendix C: Minister's Mandate and Actions Summary

In the Premier's annual Mandate Letter to the Minister dated June 2013, the Minister of Environment received direction on strategic priorities for the 2014/15 fiscal year. These priorities and the Ministry's resulting actions are summarized below:

Mandate Letter Direction	Ministry's Action
1. Balance the Ministry budget in order to control spending and ensure an overall balanced budget for the Province of British Columbia	The Ministry of Environment budgets were balanced for the 2014/15 budget year.
2. Complete the marine and land-based heavy oil spill response studies for our government's five conditions for proposed heavy oil pipeline projects in BC	The second policy intentions paper was released in April 2014. Formal feedback on the intentions paper was reviewed, collated and released to the public in December 2014. Consultation was conducted with: Transport Canada; Natural Resources Canada; Environment Canada; BC Oil and Gas Commission; the Ministry of Natural Gas Development; the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure; Alberta Energy; the Union of British Columbia Municipalities; and the Alberta Energy Regulator.
3. Review the Environmental Assessment Office and ensure timelines are appropriate for both economic development and environmental protection objectives, making recommendations for improvement as necessary	The review is still ongoing. EAO has identified and implemented a suite of improvements that met objectives of the review including: • Public consultation now occurs earlier in the environmental assessment process to focus on key issues; • There is increased emphasis on collaboration with agency partners, including a Memorandum of Understanding with the BC Oil and Gas Commission which improves timeliness of reviews and strengthens compliance and enforcement; • The introduction of fees for environmental assessments and post-certificate work has resulted in a $2.96 M annual lift to the Environmental Assessment Office budget to stabilize capacity and resources; • The public consultation process has been improved; • Industry and stakeholders are being engaged on opportunities to make further improvements; • Key performance indicators are being developed;

	• A coordinated approach across provincial government agencies (e.g. regulatory working group, consistent project working group members) has resulted in consistent working group members for LNG projects; and • Substitution requests, where appropriate on proposed projects, has reduced duplication with the federal process.
4. Review the Pacific Carbon Trust and provide options for reform	The Pacific Carbon Trust transitioned to government as the Climate Investment Branch in the Ministry's Climate Action Secretariat to achieve savings, support government's commitment to carbon neutrality and continue developing the carbon market.
5. Work with the Minister of Natural Gas Development and ensure liquefied natural gas operations in B.C. are the cleanest in the world	New interim ambient air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide have been developed to support having the world's cleanest LNG facilities. Additional work has been undertaken in support of criteria and emission standard development, including: • *Greenhouse Gas Industrial Reporting and Control Act* received Royal Assent on November 27, 2014; • LNG Environmental Incentive Program; • Reporting Regulation Intentions Paper public consultation; • Intentions papers under development in support of Offset and Compliance Regulations; and • Draft Prince Rupert airshed study report.
6. Complete consultation on the modernization of the *Water Act* and introduce and pass legislation as committed in *Strong Economy, Secure Tomorrow*.	The *Water Sustainability Act*, which modernized the *Water Act*, was passed by the legislature in April 2014. The Ministry announced fees and rentals on February 5, 2015. Engagement with stakeholder groups and First Nations on priority regulations is expected to be completed by September 2015.
7. Consult with communities, First Nations and industry to potentially develop a provincially-designated protected area in the Klappan (Sacred Headwaters)	The Ministry of Environment has completed its involvement in planning for a Klappan protected area.

8. Create a new roundtable of representatives from communities, industry, labour, First Nations and the environmental sector to provide guidelines on how to balance environmental protection with economic development	In March 2014, the Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy was established. The Roundtable members include representatives from communities, industry, labour, First Nations and the environmental sector. Four meetings were held during 2014/15. Key topics discussed included: • Current environmental and economic considerations in BC; • Framework for Liquefied Natural Gas in the Kitimat Valley; • Update on Mt. Polley; • Proposed water fees and rentals to support implementation of the *Water Sustainability Act*; • Developing a world-leading spill regime; • Exploring options to ensure a financially sustainable future for BC Parks; and • Wolf management.
9. Ensure all revenues from fishing licenses are provided to the Freshwater Fisheries Society for conservation purposes no later than 2015/16	The Ministry of Environment worked with the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations and the Freshwater Fisheries Society to determine the range of services and activities that the Society will deliver under this mandate direction. An agreement between the Province and the Society was announced March 9, 2015 to provide 100 percent of revenue generated from fishing licences directly to the Society.
10. Create an annual water use report for companies involved in hydraulic fracturing to ensure public awareness of the water conservation strategies being undertaken by upstream natural gas companies	Under the *Water Sustainability Act*, large water users are required to regularly measure and report their water use. The *Act* also strengthens the need to use water wisely by including requirements that support water conservation. The Oil and Gas Commission reports annually on water used for hydraulic fracturing across the province.